

BLESS THIS MESS

Episode 3: Vicar lurking by the post office noticeboard

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We begin with a detour into musical theatre, then open our next question, from a vicar whose family has left the church after a disagreement over a social issue. It touches on division in the Church of England and what it feels like when people leave. We talk about rupture and repair, the weight of the collar, and why rushing in to fix things can sometimes do harm. We also explore sitting with discomfort, disagreeing safely, and what it might mean for the church to be the place where we sit together.

In this episode:

- Starting with musical theatre: Andrew Lloyd Webber, Stephen Sondheim and Alan Menken
- Our question
- Social issues and division in the Church of England
- The Clergy Support Trust as a space for everyone, whatever you think
- The wellbeing side of the question, alongside ministry statistics and evangelism
- Giving yourself a break
- Creating space: when to reach out to people, and when not to
- The weight of the collar: what does it mean to people?
- An open door policy
- Rupture and repair
- How does someone actually feel about someone leaving?
- "One body" and being inclusive
- Archbishop Sarah: "fear is one..." / "Communion is where we come together" [add full quote]
- Loss and endings: endings are hard
- The Lord's Prayer and "enemy at my table"
- Focusing on what unites us, not what divides us
- Nervous system thoughts
- The firefighter: rushing in to fix can sometimes cause harm
- Sitting with discomfort
- The film ‘About A Boy’
- Bishop Goodhew on healing and wounds: accepting there is a wound [check name]
- Active listening: what do you miss, and how to validate
- Let Them / Let Me
- Agency: we are not here to fix
- Sam Wells: working with mess as the fundamental calling of the church
- Allowing people in the community to flourish and grow
- Adapting to change: we evolve
- The church "should" be the place we sit together
- Disagreement is a natural part of life, so how do we do it?
- Creating a safe space where people can disagree safely

Mentioned in this episode:

- The Let Them Theory by Mel Robbins
- If Books Could Kill (podcast)
- Sam Wells (writing on working with mess)
- Film: About A Boy
- Clergy Support Trust:https://www.clergysupport.org.uk

We want to hear from you, especially our vicars!

Bless this Mess cannot exist in isolation. If you have a question for our podcast please click this confidential link

If you'd like to comment on the podcast you can do so via our email address:
podcast@clergysupport.org.uk

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Bless This Mess is a podcast from Clergy Support Trust, produced by Meraki Creative Therapies. It was recorded and mixed by La Barca Sound, with engineering by Nick Sowden and sound design by Bekah Nelson and Nick Sowden. The podcast is produced by Bekah Nelson and Nick Sowden, with content developed by Meraki Creative Therapies in collaboration with Catherine Good. It is hosted by Bekah Nelson and Ben Cahill-Nicholls, with intro and section scripts written by Louise Stanley, and was recorded on location at All Saints Church, Tilford.

Warning: *This episode contains themes around mental health. If you find any of the content difficult or triggering, please consider reaching out for support. You can contact Samaritans on 116 123 (free, 24/7), call NHS 111 and press 2 for the urgent mental health helpline in England, or in an emergency call 999. Clergy may also wish to contact Clergy Support Trust or their diocesan wellbeing team https://www.clergysupport.org.uk/*